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ABSTRACT

In many school districts, particularly large urban districts, there has been an increase in the number of language minority students and in the linguistic and sociocultural diversity of these students. Historically, programs that served these students tended to operate and be administered separately from the mainstream program. Recent federal legislation has sought to end such fragmentation and isolation of compensatory education programs. The reauthorized Bilingual Education Act (1994) attempts to link the education of limited-English-proficient (LEP) students to efforts to reform the entire school system. The 32 projects funded in fiscal year 1995 are distributed across fourteen states and serve 420,000 LEP students from over 40 language groups. A study of districtwide reform indicates that a number of factors facilitated districtwide implementation of bilingual education. They include: collaboration among mainstream and bilingual/English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) personnel; placement of bilingual/ESL personnel in key district positions; articulation that removes barriers to cooperation; strong leadership; staff development; peer teaching and mentoring; planning for change; qualified teachers; active teacher and school personnel support; and participation of parents as partners in the process. Appendices contain a list of the districtwide programs, an excerpt of the federal legislation, and a list of additional resources. (Contains 18 references.) (MSE)

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IN LANGUAGE & EDUCATION

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No. 11, Fall 1997

GOING SYSTEMWIDE WITH BILINGUAL EDUCATION

by Kris Anstrom and Barbara Silcox

Information about the Title VII Systemwide projects was taken from the project abstracts contained in a draft Directory of Title VII Systemwide Projects. The abstracts were sent to each Systemwide Project Director for review and updating.

A New Era for Bilingual Education

Changes in our society, technological advances, and emerging global roles have created a need for schools and their communities to form new and enhanced educational systems that meet the needs of today's teachers and learners. Research on educational reform indicates that effective change involves more than one teacher in one classroom; it involves "changes that go deep into the structure of organizations and the ways in which people work together" (Stiegelbauer, 1994). No longer is change merely a means to an end; it has become a desired goal in its own right. Successful school systems are those that develop an institutionalized capacity to plan for and manage changing needs and new programs (Stiegelbauer, 1994). Such a finding should be viewed as a welcome opportunity for those involved with the education of language minority students since this student population is perhaps the most in need of schools and school districts that can readily adapt to growing numbers of students with diverse linguistic and sociocultural student backgrounds.

For many school districts, particularly large urban districts, change has meant an increase in the number of language minority students and in the linguistic and sociocultural diversity of these students. According to the U.S. Department of Education's State Education Agency Survey, for the 1994-95 school year 3,184,696 limited English proficient (LEP) students were enrolled in the nation's schools. This count continued an upward trend seen over the past several years. Since 1990-91, yearly increases in the number of LEP students have ranged from 2% in 1990-91, to almost 16% from 1993-94 to 1994-95 (Macias and Kelly, 1996). Data compiled

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by the U.S. Department of Commerce from the 1990 Census indicate that almost all of the counties with 10,000 or more limited English proficient children and youth are large urban areas, such as Los Angeles County with 361,541 LEP students, Dade County, which contains the city of Miami, with 60,085 LEP students, and Kings County, which includes portions of New York City, with 66,654 LEP students (National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education World Wide Web Site, 1996). In addition, the Council of the Great City Schools reports that students in Great City Schools speak some 125 languages (Council of the Great City Schools, 1995). These indicators point to the growing need for effective districtwide programs for these students, particularly within our large urban areas.

Historically, programs that have served these students tended to operate and be administered separately from the mainstream program. Recent federal legislation, such as *The Goals 2000: Educate America Act* (Goals 2000) and the *Improving America's Schools Act of 1994* (IASA), brought an end to the fragmentation and isolation of many compensatory education programs, including those targeted for language minority students. Both *Goals 2000* and *IASA* encourage school districts to provide services to all students in a comprehensive and integrated manner.

In particular, the reauthorized Bilingual Education Act (Title VII, *IASA*, 1994) embraces elements such as school and districtwide systemic reform, maximum local flexibility, emphasis on high standards, establishment of parent and community partnerships, and substantive commitment to professional development to ensure that bilingual education programs are not isolated from school reform efforts. A primary purpose of projects funded under the new legislation is to link the education of LEP students to efforts to reform the entire school system (Holmes, D., 1995). An important change in Title VII was the creation of new bilingual programming aimed at improving, reforming and upgrading relevant programs and operations within an entire school district, or system, having significant concentrations of LEP students (U.S. Congress, *IASA*, 1994). During the first year of implementation of the new legislation, the U.S. Department of Education funded 32 Systemwide Improvement Projects.

The FY95 Systemwide Projects

The 32 Title VII projects funded in FY95 are distributed across fourteen states, with California having the largest number of projects. See Table 1. Three of the projects are located in rural districts (in Colorado, New Mexico, and Oklahoma), the others are located in urban districts. In addition, the projects are serving approximately 420,000 LEP students from over 40 language groups. Table 2 shows the top ten language groups by numbers of students served.

Table 1. Distribution of FY95 Systemwide Projects by State and Numbers of LEP Students Served

State	Number of Projects	Number of LEP Students Served
Arizona	1	11,981
California	13	111,072
Colorado	1	1,493
Connecticut	1	4,283
Florida	3	34,012
Louistana	1	1,347
Massachusetts	1	1,234
Minnesota	1	5,300
Missouri	1	2,500
New Mexico	2	4,606
New York	3	169,604
Oklahoma	1	1,619
Pennsylvania	1	9,131
Texas	2	61,767

Figures were obtained from original proposals; in some instances figures were updated by project directors to reflect actual numbers of LEP students served in FY96.

Table 2. Top Ten Language Groups Served by Systemwide Projects by Numbers of Students

Language Group	Number of Projects	Number of Students
Spanish	29	162,341
Chinese/Cantonese/Mandarin	16	9,652
Armenian	2	8,397
Vietnamese	17	7,592
Haitian/Creole	5	5,317
Hmong	2	3,031
Laotian	4	2,086
Tagalog	9	2,038
Korean	10	2,006
Pilipino	2	1,882

Note: A program can serve more than one language group

Other languages identified by the Systemwide projects included: Albanian, Arabic, Assyrian, Belarus, Bengali, Cherokee, Dutch, Farsi, French, Gujarati, Indonesian, Japanese, Keres, Khmer, Polish, Samoan, Serbo-Croatian, Thai, Tiwa, Ukranian, Urdu, and Zuni.

The school districts where the Systemwide Improvement Projects are located range in total student enrollment from approximately 2,000 (in Zuni, NM) to 1 million (in New York City). Nineteen of the projects are in school districts where the number of LEP students represents 25% or more of the total district enrollment. Enrollment figures for each project are included with the listing of projects in Appendix A.

Systemwide Project Initiatives

In her study of districtwide education reform, Toni Griego-Jones (1995) identified a number of factors that facilitated the districtwide implementation of a bilingual program. These factors included but were not necessarily limited to the following: modifications in district processes and procedures that break down barriers between bilingual and non-bilingual personnel and programs; visible and strongly stated support from the superintendent and/or school board; intensive and ongoing staff development; the use of classroom teachers as trainers; adequate time to allow for change; and participant buy-in. Among the initial 32 Systemwide Improvement Projects funded under Title VII by the U.S. Department of Education, these same factors are stressed to varying degrees depending upon the project's focus.

Collaboration among Mainstream and Bilingual/ESL Personnel

A key element in school or districtwide reform for LEP students is the involvement of both mainstream and bilingual/ESL personnel in the reform effort. Indeed as Stiegelbauer (1994) indicates, people are the most important element in change. Effective systemwide programs for bilingual students involve a shift in thinking about the traditional roles educators have assumed. Reform at the district level implies that bilingual and ESL educators must shift their thinking and actions to the larger mainstream arena. They must become involved in the overall operations of the school and district. Furthermore, non-bilingual personnel must also shift their thinking towards being responsible for the implementation and development of programming aimed at LEP students. No longer can issues related to curriculum, testing, placement, etc. of language minority students be left only to those directly involved in the bilingual education program (Griego-Jones, 1995). How to achieve the involvement of non-bilingual personnel in bilingual education reform is a key consideration for systemwide programs.

Placement of Bilingual/ESL Personnel in Key District Positions

A number of systemwide projects emphasize the formation of strong alliances between those involved with the bilingual program and other key departments within the district. Such an emphasis is critical given the importance the literature on school change attaches to one-to-one supportive contact and group problem solving discussions (Stiegelbauer, 1994). One project explicitly addresses this issue through the implementation of a management model that places

persons knowledgeable about the education of LEP students in resource positions in district units responsible for improving, upgrading and reforming the district's services to students. The intent is to ensure that the needs and education of LEP students are considered in all systemic reform areas and particularly in the development of performance standards and assessments.

Cross-cutting Approach to Instruction

Breaking down barriers through modifying practices and procedures also facilitates the reform process. Systemwide projects have initiated this type of change by including managers from various categorical programs, such as early childhood education, Title I, foreign languages, multicultural education, social studies, English, and English as a second language, into one integrated team. Another project supports small learning communities for LEP students that bridge the gap between elementary and secondary education. Through clustering, the project brings together a high school with its feeder middle and elementary schools in a shared instructional vision which includes the development of bilingualism among both English-dominant and Spanish-dominant students.

Strong Leadership

Successful reform requires effective leaders. The literature on school reform agrees that without the explicit support of district, board and school administrators, change would not be implemented (Stiegelbauer, 1994). The importance of leadership is directly addressed by several of the systemwide projects. While one project provides support and training to site-based leadership teams in schoolwide planning and meeting the needs of LEP students, another project emphasizes the involvement of Board of Education members and other administrators in determining the needs of the district and how those needs can be met through the systemwide project. Establishing curriculum and standards committees composed of administrators, teachers and parents is yet another approach to involving the skills of school and district leaders in reform initiatives for language minority students. Several systemwide projects emphasize training current administrators in bilingual and multicultural education to ensure that these leaders will have the knowledge and skills necessary for strong and informed leadership on language minority student issues.

Professional Development

Intensive and ongoing staff development is frequently mentioned as critical to successful reform. Some systemwide projects offer teachers free tuition for coursework which allows them to meet state certification endorsement requirements and complete requirements for graduate-level degrees. Other projects extend professional development further by establishing

collaborative and cooperative arrangements with institutions of higher education (IHEs). According to the U.S. Department of Education study *Model Strategies in Bilingual Education: Professional Development*, a notable characteristic of every project in this study was the extensive collaboration between school districts and IHEs. In systemwide projects that employ this approach, colleges and universities provide subject matter and pedagogical expertise, ideas for project design and materials, and college credit. Likewise school personnel provide insight about the nature of problems, feedback on the usefulness of plans and materials, and the willingness to try new approaches and become learners as well as teachers (Leighton, et.al., 1995).

Peer Teaching and Mentoring

Griego-Jones (1995) notes that the use of experienced classroom teachers, both bilingual and non-bilingual, as trainers was key to the success of the districtwide reform she investigated. Positive outcomes of such cooperative arrangements included enhanced understanding between bilingual and non-bilingual teaching staffs, the fostering of mutual respect, and the creation of a more collaborative climate between the two groups. "Working together in planning and delivering staff development disseminated knowledge and appreciation for the work of bilingual teachers. It also lent support as non-bilingual teachers learned more about issues related to second language learning..." (Griego-Jones, 1995).

Some projects specifically emphasize using teachers, administrators and parents as trainers. For example, in one project, a cadre of model sites was established to focus on improving the quality of bilingual programs through concentrated work on curriculum, instruction, assessment, staff development, and family literacy. These target sites serve to anchor and guide reform throughout the district by training a critical mass of teachers, administrators, and parents to lead and assist in facilitating change within other schools. Another project trains teams of teachers, administrators, parents, and business/community leaders to implement site-based reform and to work together in an interconnected and cooperative manner.

Planning for Change

Allowing enough time for change is a crucial aspect of the reform process if Systemwide bilingual education programs are to take hold in districts. "Successful change...requires a long-term process of action, refinement, and support to clarify and to integrate innovation use" (Stiegelbauer, 1994). Beginning with model programs or demonstration sites which can then be adapted to other schools throughout the district is one method several systemwide projects have used to ensure that reform is given the gestation period necessary for staff to become educated in new ways of teaching and learning. One project has developed a model middle

school and high school with "best practice" strands in LEP instruction. Successful strands will then be disseminated to the 12 other middle and high schools in the district.

Qualified Teachers

Bilingual education programs face unique challenges that require exceptional amounts of time. Many districts have experienced difficulty in finding qualified teachers who are fluent in two languages. "The dual-language proficiency that is a key component of bilingual programs is a time and labor intensive ingredient not present in most other reform efforts" (Griego-Jones, 1995). Several of the systemwide projects address this issue in specific ways. One systemwide project plans to increase the number of multiple-endorsed teachers in English as a second language, bilingual education, and special education by expanding an existing career ladder program for instructional assistants. Recognizing the need not only for well-trained teachers but for administrators and principals who have bilingual education backgrounds, another project uses systemwide funds to develop "culturally competent" administrators through the training and education of existing principals.

Participant Buy-in

Participant buy-in by teachers and other school personnel affected by new programming promotes effective school reform. Stiegelbauer (1994) points out that teachers are concerned whether a change will have practical outcomes for them and for their students, whether it has clear goals and procedures, and whether it will have continuing support and clarification. These concerns will more likely be addressed when teachers are themselves involved in planning for new programming. Using districtwide project teams for program enhancement and development and incorporating instructional staff in all phases of project development from planning to implementation are some of the ways in which projects have addressed issues related to participant buy-in.

Parents as Partners

Equally important, though often overlooked participants, are the parents of LEP students. Numerous research studies have highlighted the importance of parental participation in their children's education. The Title VII legislation that initiated Systemwide Improvement grants specifically mentions that these grants may be used to "improve the education of limited English proficient students and their families by reviewing, restructuring, and upgrading...family education programs and parent outreach and training activities designed to assist parents to become active participants in the education of their children" (Title VII, *IASA*, 1994). Systemwide projects have encouraged parents to become more active in their children's education by involving them in the writing of performance objectives as well as other program

planning activities and by establishing family literacy centers. These centers strengthen home-school cultural connections and give parents the tools to become true partners in their children's schooling process.

Forming the vanguard for systemwide reform of bilingual education, these 32 projects are in the process of demonstrating that the education of language minority students can and should be integrated with districtwide efforts to reform education for all students. They have initiated innovative programs that improve the educational opportunities for LEP students and ensure that Title VII programs are not isolated from on-going districtwide reforms.

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Appendix A

FY 95 Title VII Systemwide Projects

Arizona (1)

Tucson Unified School District
Project M.E.T.A.
1010 East 10th Street
Tucson, AZ 85719

District Enrollment: 60,032
District LEP Population: 11,981

California (13)

Alum Rock Union Elem. School District
Project DREAMS
2930 Gay Avenue
San Jose, CA 95127

District Enrollment: 15,706
District LEP Population: 6,496

Bassett Unified School District
Project Achievement Unlimited
904 North Willow Ave.
La Puente, CA 91746

District Enrollment: 5,500
District LEP Population: 2,352

Campbell Union School District
155 North Third Street
Campbell, CA 95008

District Enrollment: 7,167
District LEP Population: 1,271

Fremont Unified School District
Project ACCESS
4210 Technology Drive
Fremont, CA 94538

District Enrollment: 29,149
District LEP Population: 3,800

Glendale Unified School District
Project SUCCESS
223 North Jackson Street
Glendale, CA 91206

District Enrollment: 29,674
District LEP Population: 14,299

Lawndale School District
Project L.E.A.R.N.
4161 West 147th Street
Lawndale, CA 90250

District Enrollment: 4,875
District LEP Population: 1,527

Los Angeles Unified School District
Project REBUILD
1302 West 182nd Street
Gardena, CA 90248

District Enrollment: 10,834
District LEP Population: 4,784

Los Angeles Unified School District
Grants/Van Nuys Cluster
Literacy Network
6621 Balboa Blvd
Van Nuys, CA 91406

District Enrollment: 25,592
District LEP Population: 12,003

California (cont)

Ocean View School District
2382 Etting Road
Oxnard, CA 93033

District Enrollment: 2,406
District LEP Population: 1,165

San Diego City Schools
1775 Chatsworth, #137
San Diego, CA 92107

District Enrollment: 125,000
District LEP Population: 34,338

San Francisco Unified School District
Project Reaching High
135 Van Ness Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94117

District Enrollment: 62,128
District LEP Population: 18,104

San Jose Unified School District
RISE to Success
855 Lenzen Ave
San Jose, CA 95126

District Enrollment: 30,025
District LEP Population: 7,625

San Ysidro School District
4350 Otay Mesa Road
San Ysidro, CA 92173

District Enrollment: 3,794
District LEP Population: 3,308

Colorado (1)

Weld BOCES
204 Main Street
LaSalle, CO 80645

District Enrollment: 6,243
District LEP Population: 1,493

Connecticut (1)

Hartford Public Schools
Project Think and Learn
153 Market Street
Hartford, CT 06103

District Enrollment: 23,921
District LEP Population: 4,283

Florida (3)

Broward County Public Schools
Project EMPOWER
1441 South Federal Highway
Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33316

District Enrollment: 199,011
District LEP Population: 14,156

Dade County Public Schools
Project BETTER
1500 Biscayne Blvd. Suite 324
Miami, FL 33132

District Enrollment: 320,988
District LEP Population: 47,197

Florida (cont)

School District of Palm Beach County
Project CARE/Extra CARE 2000
101 Barwick Road
Delray Beach, FL 33445

District Enrollment: 128,010
District LEP Population: 15,686

Louisiana (1)

Orleans Parish School Board
Project Achieve
3510 General DeGaulle Drive
New Orleans, LA 70114

District Enrollment: 84,758
District LEP Population: 1,347

Massachusetts (1)

Cambridge School System
Reform Project
159 Thorndike Street
Cambridge, MA 02141

District Enrollment: 8,016
District LEP Population: 1,234

Minnesota (1)

Minneapolis Public Schools
807 Northeast Broadway
Minneapolis, MN 55413

District Enrollment: 43,701
District LEP Population: 5,300

Missouri (1)

St. Louis Public Schools
Bilingual Systemic Reform Initiative
1615 Hampton
St. Louis, MO 63139

District Enrollment: 42,000
District LEP Population: 2,500

New Mexico (2)

Zuni Public School District
P.O. Drawer A
Zuni, NM 87327

District Enrollment: 2,133
District LEP Population: 2,086

Bernalillo Public Schools
P.O. Box 640
Bernalillo, NM 87004

District Enrollment: 3,600
District LEP Population: 2,520

New York (3)

Buffalo City School District
731 City Hall
Buffalo, NY 14202

District Enrollment: 47,701
District LEP Population: 2,914

New York City Public Schools
District 10
One Fordham Plaza, 8th Floor
Bronx, NY 10458

District Enrollment: 39,915
District LEP Population: 12,789

New York (cont)

New York City Public Schools
49 Flatbush Avenue Ext. Room 701
Brooklyn, NY 11201

District Enrollment: 1,015,756
District LEP Population: 154,526

Oklahoma (1)

Tenkiller Public Schools
Project SERVE
Rt 1, Box 750
Welling, OK 74471

District Enrollment: 2,706
District LEP Population: 1,619

Pennsylvania (1)

School District of Philadelphia
2603 North 5th Street
Philadelphia, PA 19116

District Enrollment: 204,557
District LEP Population: 9,131

Texas (2)

Houston Independent School District
3830 Richmond Ave
Houston, TX 77027

District Enrollment: 202,313
District LEP Population: 50,839

Ysleta Independent School District
Project Mariposa
9600 Sims
El Paso, TX 79925

District Enrollment: 46,879
District LEP Population: 10,928

Appendix B

The Improving America's Schools Act of 1994 (Public Law 103-382) Title VII: Bilingual Education, Language Enhancement, and Language Acquisition Programs

Subpart 1--Bilingual Education Capacity and Demonstration Grants

"SEC. 7115. SYSTEMWIDE IMPROVEMENT GRANTS.

"(a) Purpose.--The purpose of this section is to implement districtwide bilingual education programs or special alternative instruction programs to improve, reform, and upgrade relevant programs and operations, within an entire local educational agency, that serve a significant number of children and youth of limited English proficiency in local educational agencies with significant concentrations of such children and youth.

"(b) Program Authorized.--

"(1) Authority.--(A) The Secretary is authorized to award grants to eligible entities having applications approved under section 7116 to enable such entities to carry out activities described in paragraphs (3) and (4).

"(B) Each grant under this section shall be awarded for 5 years.

"(2) Termination.--The Secretary shall terminate grants to eligible entities under this section if the Secretary determines that--

"(A) the program evaluation required by section 7123 indicates that students in the program are not being taught to and are not making adequate progress toward achieving challenging State content standards and challenging State student performance standards; or

"(B) in the case of a program to promote dual language facility, such program is not promoting such facility.

"(3) Preparation.--Grants under this section may be used during the first 12 months exclusively for activities preparatory to the delivery of services.

"(4) Uses.--Grants under this section may be used to improve the education of limited English proficient students and their families by reviewing, restructuring, and upgrading--

"(A) educational goals, curriculum guidelines and content, standards and assessments;

"(B) personnel policies and practices including recruitment, certification, staff development, and assignment;

"(C) student grade-promotion and graduation requirements;

"(D) student assignment policies and practices;

Appendix B

The Improving America's Schools Act of 1994 (Public Law 103-382) Title VII: Bilingual Education, Language Enhancement, and Language Acquisition Programs

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"(A) educational goals, curriculum guidelines and content, standards and assessments;

"(B) personnel policies and practices including recruitment, certification, staff development, and assignment;

"(C) student grade-promotion and graduation requirements;

"(D) student assignment policies and practices;

Appendix C

Additional Resources

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